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TRUSTEES OF THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND

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H W Johnston, *The Private Life of the Romans*

SCOTT, FORESMAN & CO

The author of this book in his preface says that in preparing it he has "had in mind the needs of three classes of students. It is intended in the first place for seniors in high schools and freshmen in colleges; in the second place for more advanced college students who may be taking lectures on the subjects of which it treats; in the third place for readers and students of Roman history, who are engaged chiefly with important political and constitutional questions, and often feel the need of a simple and compact description of domestic life."

For the high school portion of the first class of students the book contains too much material to enable it well to serve as a textbook. Furthermore, I do not believe it would be wise to place a book on this subject in the hands of a high school pupil for systematic study. Probably the author does not intend that this book shall be so placed. This is, of course, not saying that a book on this subject may not be useful to the high school pupil for reference. Indeed, I think it may be very useful. I think, too, that many boys and girls will be so interested that they will read considerable portions of this book, or the whole of it, with much pleasure and profit. But I object to the addition of this subject to an already overloaded curriculum.

College students will find the book useful to give a preparatory view of the subject, which may be supplemented by lectures and readings in larger and more detailed works. To the readers of the third class the author might have added the large number of cultivated people who, without being classical specialists, are nevertheless interested in the

life and literature of the ancient Greek and Roman peoples. These will find given in a concise yet interesting form a considerable amount of information which will help in clearing up many obscurities of their reading or study.

In an introduction of about ten pages the author defines and limits his subject, gives some account of the sources of information, and furnishes a brief list of books useful to the student for reading and reference. This list contains about twenty titles, wisely selected, in general, though a few works are included which must be used with caution. One notices some omissions of books which would seem fairly to have deserved to be included. For instance, as books in foreign languages are admitted to the list, the *Dictionnaire des Antiquités* of Daremberg and Saglio seems worthy of a place. It is valuable and readily accessible, at least in the larger libraries, so far as it is completed. At the beginning of each chapter, except one, and elsewhere in the book, special references are given in detail to these and other works. These references form a feature of the book very valuable to the student.

The substance of the book is contained in about three hundred pages, divided into twelve chapters. The first chapter is on The Family. Its scope may be seen from these subtitles of sections: The Household; The Splitting up of a House; Other Meanings of *Familia*; *Agnati*; *Cognati*; *Adfines*; The Family Cult; Adoption; *The Patria Potestas*; Limitations; Extinction of the *Potestas*; *Manus*; *Dominica Potestas*. The second chapter is on The Name. The twelfth and last chapter is entitled Burial-Places and Funeral Ceremonies. Intermediate chapters are on Marriage and the Position of Woman; Children and Education; Dress and Personal Ornaments; Sources of Income and Means of Living, etc. This will show the comprehensiveness of the book.

It will be seen, then, that the purpose of the book is ambitious. It aims to cover in three hundred pages the life of the Roman citizen

from the cradle to the grave. Yes, even before the cradle; for it is significant that the chapter on Marriage and the Position of Woman is placed before the chapter on Children and Education. That this is the order which the Roman would thoroughly approve, let the word *matrimonium* bear witness.

In a work so ambitious and yet so small (a simple calculation will show that if the work were all about one man's life, lasting fifty years, only six pages on the average could be allotted to each year) it is inevitable that some things of importance should be either omitted or lightly treated. The real test of completeness would be to read the more commonly studied Latin authors with this book close at hand, and to consult the book at every allusion to a matter connected with private life. I have not tested the book in this way, but after a rather careful examination I can think of little which in my opinion should be added. The modern dweller in a city apartment-house, reading Martial and other writers of the Empire, might perhaps think the *insula* deserving of a few more words than are allowed them on pages 117 and 122. A description of the *villa* of the well-to-do Roman would be interesting to a reader of Cicero. It would probably be somewhat difficult thoroughly to understand Pliny's account of his country-house at Laurentum by means of the material given here; but this cannot properly be charged against the book, since Pliny is commonly read in college later than the freshman year. On the whole, in the selection of his material the author seems to have used excellent judgment.

In a book like this, which is to be used for reference, the index should be very full and very accurate. The index to this book is full and accurate, but there is room for some improvement. Every Latin word, that is, every technical term explained in the text, should be referred to in the index; but I fail to find *insula*, *grex* (a troupe), *lapis Puteolanus*, *subsellium*, *flagellum*, and numerous other words. And, by the way, why should the information given in the foot-note on page 184 (meanings of certain names like *Fabius*, *Porcius*) not be referred to either in the index or in the chapter especially devoted to proper names?

It is to be regretted that Professor Johnston, like many Englishmen and some Americans, should adhere to the spellings Caius

and Cnaeus, in deference to an assumed necessity of perpetuating in English the mistakes or errors of early English writers. If Shakespeare wrote of Caius Cassius, let us forgive him: he knew no better. If Caius and Virgil are used to-day as English Christian names, by all means let us keep these words for this use. But let us not try by perverse spellings to make our young people think that Vergil and Gaius Julius Caesar were Englishmen, or that our own Caiuses and Virgils are lineal name-descendants of Roman citizens.

The book is very fully illustrated with over two hundred pictures, mostly small. Pictures may be made very helpful in a book like this. The existing material for illustration is abundant, and selection is no easy task. The problem is to find something unhackneyed, well-authenticated, and exactly adapted to the purpose. Except in the early part of the book very few of the cuts seem to be put in merely for the purpose of embellishment. Perhaps a little more explanation would have been a good thing in the case of some pictures. For instance, the use of letters or numerals, as in figure 55, would have been useful in explaining the admirable plans (figures 39 and 40) showing the development of the Roman *domus* from the early simple *atrium*. The swelling on the toe of the foot in the lower left corner of figure 92 (Roman shoes) might well be explained to the youthful student. The wings sprouting from the shoulders of the olive-pickers in figure 114 may cause the reader to wonder whether an olive-picker is a bird or a youth on a Daedalian flying-machine; and what the use of the ladder may be. The reader should be warned of the masks in the Vatican miniature scene from the Phormio (figure 133); no mention of masks is made in the accompanying text. It is doubtful if the descriptions in the text are sufficient to explain completely figure 189. But these are minor matters. Most of the cuts are well executed mechanically and form real illuminating additions to the text.

To sum up, the book gives in an entertaining form much valuable information. It is the best book of its size on this subject which I have yet seen. In printing, binding, and illustrations it reflects credit on the liberal and enterprising spirit of its publishers.

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